

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-9, and 11-24 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-9 and 11-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Johnston et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,428,013). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to call for a sealing ring comprising a bearing ring with a radial flange and sealing sleeve, wherein the sealing sleeve includes, on a side radially facing away from a shaft to be sealed, a peripherally surrounding flat covering. Claim 1 has also been amended to call for a ratio of a height (H) of the bulge to a thickness (D) of the covering is at least 4 and/or that a ratio of the height (H) to a width (B) of the bulge (6) is in the range of 0.5 to 5. This subject matter was previously found in dependent claims 4 and 10, respectively. The subject matter of claim 10 is indicated as being allowable. Since claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 10, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 and each corresponding dependent claim are not anticipated by Johnston.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants acknowledge, with thanks, the allowable subject matter of claim 10. As stated above, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 4 and claim 10. Therefore, independent claim 1 and each corresponding dependent claim should now be in condition for allowance.

NEW CLAIMS

New claims 23 and 24 have been added. These claims are fully supported by the specification and drawings as originally filed. No new matter has been added. Favorable consideration of these new claims is respectfully requested.

Claim 23 calls for a sealing ring comprising a bearing ring, and a sealing sleeve that is fastened to the bearing ring. The sealing sleeve includes a free end having a bulbous portion, wherein the bulbous portion includes at least one lip-shaped projection that extends radially from the bulbous portion. The projection is closed and surrounds a shaft in a sealing manner.

The cited prior art does not anticipate or render obvious the subject matter of new claim 23. More specifically, the cited prior art does not disclose a sealing sleeve including a bulbous portion, nor a bulbous portion including at least one lip-shaped projection that extends radially from the bulbous portion. At best, Johnston merely teaches a dust excluder 60 that has a convoluted shape 68. This convoluted shape, however, falls short of the claimed bulbous portion.

Claim 24 calls for a sealing ring comprising a bearing ring, a sealing sleeve connected to the bearing ring, and a covering that covers the sealing sleeve on a surface

that faces away from a member to be sealed. The covering includes a bulbous portion, and is provided with a plurality of ribs distributed over its periphery.

The cited prior art also fails to disclose such a sealing ring. More particularly, the cited prior art fails to teach a covering including a plurality of ribs distributed over its periphery. Since the cited prior art fails to disclose such a teaching, claim 24 is neither anticipated nor obvious.

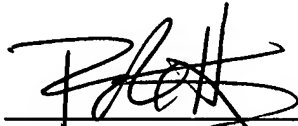
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that new claims 23 and 24 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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